

a comprehensive immigration bill that addresses a major problem facing our country. After weeks of long work, these negotiations came to a successful conclusion.

I want to thank the Members of the Senate who worked hard. I appreciate the leadership shown on both sides of the aisle. As I reflect upon this important accomplishment, important first step toward a comprehensive immigration bill, it reminds me of how much the Americans appreciate the fact that we can work together—when we work together, that they see positive things.

Immigration is a tough issue for a lot of Americans. The agreement reached today is one that will help enforce our borders, but equally importantly, it will treat people with respect. This is a bill where people who live here in our country will be treated without amnesty, but without animosity.

And so I want to thank you all very much for representing the White House. I thank the Senators for working hard. I look forward to a good vote out of the United States Senate as quickly as Leader Reid can get the bill moving. And then of course we look forward to working with the House of Representatives to take this first step and convert it into a successful second step. I really am anxious to sign a comprehensive immigration bill as soon as I possibly can. Today we took a good step toward that direction.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:25 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to S. 1348. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on Senate Action on Immigration Reform

May 17, 2007

Today Republicans and Democrats in the United States Senate came together and agreed upon a proposal that offers a much needed solution to the problem of illegal immigration in this country. This proposal delivers an immigration system that is secure, productive, orderly, and fair. I applaud the Senators who worked in the spirit of bipartisanship over the past months to address this

issue, which is critically important to the American people.

Our immigration system is badly in need of reform. The bipartisan solution the Senators agreed to today requires us to meet important goals in addressing border security and enhancing interior and worksite enforcement. Once those goals are met, the plan would create a temporary-worker program to address the needs of our growing economy and take pressure off the border by allowing workers to come to this country for a short period of time and fill jobs Americans are not doing. For immigrants wishing to come to our country permanently in the future, it would also establish a new merit-based system, which takes into account job skills, education, English proficiency, and family ties.

The plan would bring undocumented workers already in this country out of the shadows without amnesty and without animosity. It would require workers to pay a meaningful penalty, learn English, pay their taxes, and pass a background check before they can be considered for legalized status. If they achieve this legalized status and decide they want to apply for a green card, they must return home to file an application in order to get in line behind all of those who have played by the rules and followed the law.

Finally, our country has been a melting pot for over 200 years, and that has given us much strength. We must continue to help immigrants assimilate into our society. This proposal would further that effort by affirming that English is the language of the United States and would help immigrants learn our language by directing the Department of Education to make English instruction freely available over the Internet.

Convictions run deep on the matter of immigration, but with this bipartisan agreement, I am confident leaders in Washington can have a serious, civil, and conclusive debate so I can sign comprehensive reform into law this year. I urge all Members to support this bipartisan immigration reform proposal.

NOTE: The statement referred to S. 1348.

Executive Order 13434—National Security Professional Development

May 17, 2007

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to enhance the national security, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Policy. In order to enhance the national security of the United States, including preventing, protecting against, responding to, and recovering from natural and man-made disasters, such as acts of terrorism, it is the policy of the United States to promote the education, training, and experience of current and future professionals in national security positions (security professionals) in executive departments and agencies (agencies).

Sec. 2. National Strategy for Professional Development. Not later than 60 days after the date of this order, the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism (APHS/CT), in coordination with the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (APNSA), shall submit to the President for approval a National Strategy for the Development of Security Professionals (National Strategy). The National Strategy shall set forth a framework that will provide to security professionals access to integrated education, training, and professional experience opportunities for the purpose of enhancing their mission-related knowledge, skills, and experience and thereby improve their capability to safeguard the security of the Nation. Such opportunities shall be provided across organizations, levels of government, and incident management disciplines, as appropriate.

Sec. 3. Executive Steering Committee. (a) There is established the Security Professional Development Executive Steering Committee (Steering Committee), which shall facilitate the implementation of the National Strategy. Not later than 120 days after the approval of the National Strategy by the President, the Steering Committee shall submit to the APHS/CT and the APNSA an implementation plan (plan) for the National Strategy, and annually thereafter shall submit to the APHS/CT and the APNSA a status report on

the implementation of the plan and any recommendations for changes to the National Strategy.

(b) The Steering Committee shall consist exclusively of the following members (or their designees who shall be full-time officers or employees of the members' respective agencies):

- (i) the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, who shall serve as Chair;
- (ii) the Secretary of State;
- (iii) the Secretary of the Treasury;
- (iv) the Secretary of Defense;
- (v) the Attorney General;
- (vi) the Secretary of Agriculture;
- (vii) the Secretary of Labor;
- (viii) the Secretary of Health and Human Services;
- (ix) the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development;
- (x) the Secretary of Transportation;
- (xi) the Secretary of Energy;
- (xii) the Secretary of Education;
- (xiii) the Secretary of Homeland Security;
- (xiv) the Director of National Intelligence;
- (xv) the Director of the Office of Management and Budget; and
- (xvi) such other officers of the United States as the Chair of the Steering Committee may designate from time to time.

(c) The Steering Committee shall coordinate, to the maximum extent practicable, national security professional development programs and guidance issued by the heads of agencies in order to ensure an integrated approach to such programs.

(d) The Chair of the Steering Committee shall convene and preside at the meetings of the Steering Committee, set its agenda, coordinate its work, and, as appropriate to deal with particular subject matters, establish subcommittees of the Steering Committee that shall consist exclusively of members of the Steering Committee (or their designees under subsection (b) of this section), and such other full-time or permanent part-time officers or employees of the Federal Government as the Chair may designate.

Sec. 4. Responsibilities. The head of each agency with national security functions shall: